

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY
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Illegal Taxidermy Seized at Wildlife Ranch

A Hughes County wildlife ranch is at the center of an investigation that stems from the attempted sale of stolen ATVs. On Wednesday, July 9, officials from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry's Investigative Services Division with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Examiners and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, descended upon Triple S Wildlife Ranch and Resort in Calvin, Okla.

Executing a warrant, the agents searched the 3,000 acre property and a number of state and federal violations. A number of stolen ATVs were found on the property as well as two stolen tractors that were used in the daily operations of the ranch.

A number of controlled narcotics were also found on the property. These drugs were used to conduct what are called green hunts. The animals are shot with the narcotics which sedates them. Once the hunter takes a trophy photo with the animal, it is brought out of sedation. These hunts are typically done when the animal is in need of veterinary medical attention. However, Triple S was conducting these hunts strictly for profit and not for the animal's health. As the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Examiners explained, these drugs are not illegal, but it is illegal for this type of facility to obtain them.

The ranch's lodge was filled with mounted animals, many of them species that are illegal to have and sell in Oklahoma. The evidence seized by Special Agents included several duck mounts that Triple S had for sale. The sale of water fowl taxidermy violates federal law. Some of the more exotic seizures included a Caracara Mexican Eagle, Scimitar oryx and an Addax.

The Scimitar oryx is an extinct species once found in North Africa. The mount seized included a tag that clearly stated it could only be owned in Texas. The Addax is a type of antelope found in Africa and is near extinction in their native habitat.

A number of state and federal charges could be brought against the Triple S Wildlife Ranch and Resort. The name of the ranch owner has not been released as charges are still pending. More information on the Triple S Wildlife Ranch and Resort can be found at www.sss-ranch.com.